

When the Auditor General and State Treasurer lined up with Lawrence, the meeting of the State Committee and the indorsement of candidates became mere formality.

None of the leaders dared buck the \$2,100,000 payroll.

The candidates indorsed at the session—Judge W. Russell Carr Fayette, for Supreme Court, and Judge Michael A. Musmanni Allegheny, for Superior Court—were never factors in the under cover fight for control.

Neither Feared Opposition.

Neither had reason to fear of position at an open primary and their nominations in September seemed assured.

The issue was simply whether the Democratic party had become sufficiently strong to abandon the principle of handpicking nominees before they subjected themselves to the test of an open primary.

The indorsement rule was adopted in 1932 after Republican raids on the Democratic party during the '20's had reduced the minority to an abject appendage of the all-powerful majority.

Text of Rule.

The rule which undoubtedly played an important part in building the party when it was weak reads:

"Within two weeks prior to the first day fixed by law for circulating nominating petitions prior to each primary election at which candidates for State-wide offices are to be nominated, the State committee shall meet at the call of the chairman as a nominating convention for the purpose of selecting candidates to be recommended to the Democratic voters for nomination at the ensuing primary election for each public office for which nominations are to be made thereat in the State at large."

Guffey Waived Rule.

Last year when Joseph F. Guffey was a candidate for renomination his supporters moved for suspension of the indorsement rule. They were successful, thanks to the stand of Jack Kelly, who came out for a free-for-all primary, contending that pre-primary slate-making was in violation of liberality and democracy for which the party professes to stand.

Waiving of the rule worked out well that year. While Guffey had the opposition of Walter A. Jones, the primary left no scars that were not healed by the time general election rolled around.

Insistence on the part of the Lawrence-Ross-Wagner group yesterday for compliance with the rule was more significant than it appeared.

To political observers it was apparent that the group was looking forward to 1942, when a Governor will be elected. And Ross is a candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

With the woods full of Democratic candidates, it takes no seer to foresee in 1942 another bitter primary brawl comparable to that of 1938 if the rule is not rescinded.

Lawrence

TRIO HAS LEVER OF \$2,100,000 IN STATE JOB

Blocks Open Primary This
Year With Eye on
'42 Campaign.

See editorial, "Is It a Democratic Party?"

By THOMAS P. O'NEIL

Record Staff Correspondent

HARRISBURG, June 13.—A combination of National Comm- teeman David L. Lawrence, Auditor General F. Clair Ross and State Treasurer G. Harold Wagner, backed by \$2,100,000 in State payrolls, is out to take over control of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania.

That was brought out in the open when the Lawrence-Ross-Wagner alliance overrode demands for an open primary and forced adherence to the old party rule providing for a pre-primary indorsement of candidates by the State Committee.

Sentiment for Primary.

Before the meeting, which took place here Wednesday, sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of free and open primary. A large majority of the 113 members of the State Committee were in favor of discarding the indorsement rule, adopted in the day when the party was weak to prevent Republican raids on Democratic primaries.

The Guffey forces, led by State Chairman Meredith Meyers, were ready to go along. So was Philadelphia City Chairman John B. Kelly and scattered anti-organization groups.

Only Lawrence was opposed.

An hour before the committee convened, abrogation of the rule seemed assured.

Payroll Power Demonstrated.

But in that hour the power of payrolls was demonstrated.

In itself Lawrence's opposition was not formidable. But when he announced that Ross and Wagner were with him and ready to fight the situation changed completely.

The offices of Auditor General and State Treasurer are the chief sources of Democratic patronage. Ross has a biennial payroll of \$1,450,000 and Wagner \$650,000.

Many of the members of the State Committee are on those payrolls. Every one of the 6 county leaders is dependent on Ross and Wagner for jobs.

None Dared to Fight.